

Forces Qualification Course. This was quickly followed by an assignment as the Director of Special Operations Proponency at the United States Special Operation Command in Tampa, Florida.

Since his arrival to the "Red Empire," 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) in 2009, Colonel Kirila has called North Florida home. Here he initially served as a Battalion Commander and deployed to Afghanistan as the Deputy Commander of Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force-Afghanistan. We are happy to hear he intends to remain as a permanent member of our community upon his retirement and we proudly welcome him.

Colonel Kirila's awards and decorations include the Bronze Star Medal, the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal with two Oak Leaf Cluster, the Army Commendation Medal with four Oak Leaf Clusters. He has also earned the Special Forces Tab, the Ranger Tab, the Expert Infantryman's Badge, the Senior Parachutist Badge, the Pathfinder Badge, the Air Assault Badge, and the Combat Infantry Badge. His foreign awards include the El Salvadoran Parachutist Badge, the German Basic Parachutist Badge (Bronze) and the Canadian Parachutist Badge.

Mr. Speaker, without question, Colonel Robert M. Kirila, US Army, is retiring with an honorable career on which he can proudly hang his Green Beret. He has touched a number of lives throughout his time both in and out of the military and has given so much back to the country he loves so dear. It is my pleasure to join a grateful Northwest Florida community and Nation in saluting his lifetime of service. My wife, Vicki, and I thank Colonel Kirila; his wife, Chrissie; and daughters, Mia and Lily Agnes; and wish them all the best for continued success.

#### RECOGNIZING LASALLE-BACKUS EDUCATION CAMPUS'S COMMITMENT TO STEM EDUCATION

##### HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 21, 2016

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to congratulate the students, parents, and faculty of Lasalle-Backus Education Campus for their commitment to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics enrichment, and for participating in my annual Science and Technology Braintrust.

The teachers at Lasalle-Backus Education Campus are committed to ensuring that our country's youth is exposed to a STEM curriculum, which is paramount to the future of our country. A prevalent theme amongst successful STEM professionals is the curiosity and drive instilled by their teachers at a young age. We must continue to invest in schools that highlight a STEM education, so that all students will have an opportunity to one day be an astrophysicist, doctor, engineer, or a geologist.

Mr. Speaker, Lasalle-Backus Education Campus is a true advocate of STEM education and deserves recognition for its work. With great pride I can say that because of this school's commitment to STEM education, our

country's youth is gaining the skills needed to compete in a rapidly globalizing world.

#### TRIBUTE TO BOB CRITTENDEN

##### HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 21, 2016

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Bob Crittenden, of Afton, Iowa for being selected as Union County's 2016 inductee into the Iowa 4-H Hall of Fame.

Bob Crittenden is a lifetime resident of Union County. He has been involved with 4-H since becoming a member of the Royal Rustlers 4-H club in 1949 and a volunteer with the organization for 40 years. Bob showed market beef at the Union County Fair and the Iowa State Fair. Since then, he has helped with the beef projects as a mentor to the youth. He also has helped with the weighing, the show ring, and volunteered his talents as an auctioneer on many occasions.

Mr. Speaker, the example set by Bob Crittenden demonstrates the rewards of harnessing one's talents and sharing them with the world. His efforts embody the Iowa spirit and I am honored to represent Bob Crittenden and many Iowans like him in the United States Congress. I know that all of my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives will join me in congratulating Bob Crittenden for his achievements and wish him nothing but continued success.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

##### HON. LUIS V. GUTIÉRREZ

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 21, 2016

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably absent in the House chamber for votes on Tuesday, September 20, 2016. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on roll call votes 521, 522 and 523.

#### PEARLAND'S KRISHNAKUMAR HEADS BACK TO SCRIPPS NATIONAL SPELLING BEE

##### HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 21, 2016

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Pearland, Texas student Siddharth Krishnakumar for becoming co-champion of the Houston Public Media Spelling Bee—the second largest local bee in the U.S. His accomplishment means a repeat trip to the Scripps National Spelling Bee, where he previously took 4th place in the nation.

Siddharth, an eighth-grader at Pearland Junior High West, won his Spelling Bee title by correctly spelling the word "ineffable." He advances to the Scripps National Spelling Bee in February. We are very proud of Siddharth and wish him luck on the national stage.

On behalf of the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas, congratulations again

to Siddharth for becoming co-champion of the Houston Public Media Spelling Bee. Keep up the great work.

#### COMMEMORATING THE PASSING OF CHARLES Z. SMITH

##### HON. JIM McDERMOTT

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 21, 2016

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to pay tribute to my friend Justice Charles Z. Smith, of Seattle, Washington, who passed away at the age of 89 on Sunday, August 28, 2016. Charles was the first African American state trial judge and Supreme Court justice of Washington State. He was a role model to many, and leaves a trailblazing legacy of social justice and public service.

Charles Zellender Smith was born in Florida in 1927 to an African-American mother who was the daughter of slaves and a Cuban immigrant father. After serving in the U.S. Army Air Corps during World War II, he attended Temple University and graduated in 1952. Charles moved to Seattle and was accepted to the University of Washington Law School. Out of a class of 120, he was the only student of color to graduate in 1955.

His career was a series of firsts: unable to find a law firm to hire him after he graduated, he became the first African-American law clerk for a state Supreme Court justice. In 1965, he became the first African-American to serve as a Seattle municipal court judge, and in 1966, he was the first person of color named to the King County Superior Court bench.

He stepped down to become a professor and associate dean of law at the University of Washington, during which he began a long fight for reparations for Japanese Americans interned in camps during World War II. Later, in private practice, he urged the Seattle City Council to declare the city a "sanctuary city" for refugees from Guatemala and El Salvador.

In 1988, Gov. Booth Gardner appointed Smith to the State Supreme Court and he served until his retirement in 2002. He was known as a thoughtful judge with a reputation for fairness and often was the swing vote in split decisions. From the bench, he spoke eloquently, without notes, and often advocated for immigrant rights and innovative criminal rehabilitation methods.

As well as serving on the Washington State Supreme Court, Justice Smith was a television commentator and president of the American Baptist Churches. In 1999, while still on the Court, President Bill Clinton appointed him to serve on the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, where he helped develop policies promoting religious freedom and ending the civil war in Sudan.

Mr. Speaker, Justice Smith worked tirelessly for over five decades as an advocate for truth, justice and freedom. He broke down barriers and forged a path for generations to follow. He will be greatly missed.